

PCTWORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification⁵ : C11C 3/12	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 94/03566 (43) International Publication Date: 17 February 1994 (17.02.94)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US93/06968 (22) International Filing Date: 26 July 1993 (26.07.93) (30) Priority data: 07/926,611 7 August 1992 (07.08.92) US (71) Applicant: THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY [US/US]; One Procter & Gamble Plaza, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (US). (72) Inventors: WEBER, Vicki, Lynn ; 3732 Andrew Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45209 (US). BOGGS, Joseph, Stanley ; 11814 Neuss Avenue, Springdale, OH 45246 (US). KING, Richard, Max ; 7000 Knoll Road, Cincinnati, OH 45237 (US).		(74) Agents: REED, T., David et al.; The Procter & Gamble Company, 5299 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (US). (81) Designated States: AU, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CZ, FI, HU, JP, KP, KR, KZ, LK, MG, MN, MW, NO, NZ, PL, RO, RU, SD, SK, UA, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>
(54) Title: HYDROGENATION IN A PLATE HEAT EXCHANGER (57) Abstract Fatty materials are hydrogenated in a plate heat exchanger at a pressure above about 150 psig. The use of high pressure and high shear as provided by the appropriate surface to volume ratio and pressure drop in the heat exchanger, enables the fatty material to be efficiently hydrogenated, and for touch hardening the temperature can be reduced to minimize the formation of transisomers.		

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	FR	France	MR	Mauritania
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	MW	Malawi
BB	Barbados	GB	United Kingdom	NE	Niger
BE	Belgium	GN	Guinea	NL	Netherlands
BF	Burkina Faso	GR	Greece	NO	Norway
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	NZ	New Zealand
BJ	Benin	IE	Ireland	PL	Poland
BR	Brazil	IT	Italy	PT	Portugal
BY	Belarus	JP	Japan	RO	Romania
CA	Canada	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	RU	Russian Federation
CF	Central African Republic	KR	Republic of Korea	SD	Sudan
CG	Congo	KZ	Kazakhstan	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	LI	Liechtenstein	SI	Slovenia
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	LK	Sri Lanka	SK	Slovak Republic
CM	Cameroon	LU	Luxembourg	SN	Senegal
CN	China	LV	Latvia	TD	Chad
CS	Czechoslovakia	MC	Monaco	TG	Togo
CZ	Czech Republic	MG	Madagascar	UA	Ukraine
DE	Germany	ML	Mali	US	United States of America
DK	Denmark	MN	Mongolia	UZ	Uzbekistan
ES	Spain			VN	Viet Nam
FI	Finland				

HYDROGENATION IN A PLATE HEAT EXCHANGER

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONField of the Invention

10 This invention relates to hydrogenation of fatty materials in a plate heat exchanger. Specifically, it relates to processes for lightly hydrogenating unsaturated fatty materials like fatty acids, fatty esters, etc., while maintaining a favorable trans-/cis-isomer ratio and/or hydrogenating to a very low Iodine Value.

Description of Related Art

15 Hydrogenation of fatty materials is well known, having been described in U.S. Pat. Nos.: 3,073,380, Palmason; 3,634,471, Kehse; 3,809,708, Minor; 4,584,139, Gray et al.; and 4,871,485, Rivers; Japanese Pat. Appln. 02/261,897; and Soviet Union Appln. 1,142,505. The use of a plate and frame heat exchanger for
20 hydrogenation is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 3,809,708. All of said patents and patent applications are incorporated herein by reference.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25 This invention relates to a process for hydrogenating unsaturated fatty acids and/or their esters in a heat exchanger of the type generally referred to as a "plate" heat exchanger, preferably one that has a solid outer shell construction, e.g., welded, so as to provide a vessel which can withstand high pressures, e.g., more than about 150 psig, the vessel having an internal configuration
30 to provide high shear mixing under normal flow rates, and the process being run under a pressure of more than about 150 psig, preferably from about 150 to about 500 psig, more preferably from about 300 to about 400 psig, the combination of high shear mixing and high pressure being sufficient to effect essentially complete
35 reaction of the hydrogen used in the process, so that the amount of hydrogen used determines the degree of hydrogenation and the

- 2 -

temperature can be lowered during "touch hardening" to avoid formation of the trans- isomer.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention improves the existing art processes by increasing the pressure and/or shear used in the hydrogenation of fatty materials (also referred to herein as "fatty reactants" and/or "feedstock") while maintaining the advantage of superior temperature control that a plate heat exchanger provides. The common heat exchangers, of the type used in U.S. Pat. No. 3,809,708, are not suitable for optimum use, since they rely upon compression and a series of seals to maintain pressure. Preferably the heat exchanger is one that has a solid outer shell, e.g., one like those sold by Packinox of Louveciennes, France under the trade name Packinox, and by Karbate Vicarb, Inc. under the trade name Compabloc, the said heat exchangers being modified to have ratios of surface area to volume (S/V) of at least about 75, preferably from about 75 to about 300, more preferably from about 150 to about 300. The heat exchanger should have the ability to operate continuously and safely under a pressure of from about 150 to about 500 psig, preferably from about 300 to about 500 psig, more preferably from about 300 to about 400 psig. The higher pressures of hydrogen are preferred to maximize the amount of hydrogen that is dissolved in the fatty reactants, especially under conditions of low temperature.

The plate heat exchanger (hydrogenation reactor), may have inlets for the hydrogen gas at more than one place to allow introduction of the hydrogen gas as the dissolved gas is used up. This permits the reaction to continue without the necessity of having excess gas present in the initial stages when it would be present as a gas and interrupt the transfer of heat. This is desirable when one is interested in fully hydrogenating a feedstock. The heat exchanger is primarily used to remove heat as it is produced by the reaction and thereby maintain conditions where a minimum of undesirable by-products are formed and/or minimal conversion of cis- to trans- isomers occurs. Isomer conversion is increased by high temperature and slow reactions.

- 3 -

The heat exchanger should have the capability of removing the heat of the reaction as it occurs to maintain the temperature within the range of from about 120° to about 240°C, preferably from about 120° to about 180°C, more preferably from about 120° to about 150°C. This temperature range is optimum for slightly reducing the Iodine Value (IV) of the fatty reactant while minimizing formation of the trans-isomer of unsaturated fatty acids. It is recognized that when the IV is lowered to very low levels, there is very little unsaturation and therefore less need to be concerned about isomers.

The heat exchanger, in operation, should provide high shear stress, which is directly related to pressure drop per unit of the flow path length. Preferably, the pressure drop per unit length is from about 0.2 to about 2.0 psig/ft., more preferably from about 0.5 to about 1 psig/ft.

The combination of high pressure, high shear, and/or low temperature provide fast hydrogenation at mild conditions, e.g., a combination of time and temperature, that permit one to provide high production rates and/or hydrogenated fatty materials that have excellent color, heat stability, and/or odor, even for materials that are almost fully, or fully, hydrogenated.

Preferred reactors herein are those which have: a solid outer shell; an internal structure that minimizes by-passing of the plates; the capability of maintaining an internal pressure during the reaction of from about 150 to about 500 psig, preferably from about 300 to about 500 psig; a ratio of internal surface to internal volume (S/V) of from about 75 to about 300, preferably from about 150 to about 300, more preferably from about 200 to about 300; and are fabricated from material that is resistant to becoming brittle when in contact with hydrogen and/or the fatty reactant, as defined hereinafter.

Fatty Reactants

The fatty reactants include any of the fatty acids containing unsaturation. Typically, the fatty acids contain from about 8 to about 26 carbon atoms, preferably from about 14 to about 22 carbon atoms, more preferably from about 16 to about 18 carbon atoms.

- 4 -

The fatty reactants also include the esters of the above fatty acids, e.g., their methyl and ethyl esters and the mono-, di-, and tri- glycerides, and monohydroxy alcohols containing from about 8 to about 24, preferably from about 14 to about 22 carbon atoms.

5 The most preferred fatty reactants are the methyl esters.

The fatty acids that can be hydrogenated include: soybean, palm oil, erucic, canola, coconut, palm oil stearine, tallow, etc. The corresponding methyl esters are also desirable reactants.

10 Additional fatty reactants include the corresponding ethyl esters and the corresponding mono-, di-, and tri- glycerides.

The IV of the starting fatty material is typically at least about 5, preferably at least about 30, and typically from about 30 to about 150, preferably from about 30 to about 120. The IV is typically lowered by from about 2 to about 15, preferably from
15 about 5 to about 10 for "touch hardening" and to less than about 2, preferably less than about 1, for complete hardening. When the fatty material is touch hardened, the trans-isomers are preferably increased by less than about 15%, more preferably less than about 5%.

20

Hydrogen

The hydrogen gas that is used in the reaction should be free from any contaminants that will interfere with the reaction. Specifically the hydrogen should be free of moisture. It is desirable to use as little as possible of the hydrogen gas to
25 minimize separation and to maximize safety. Since the reaction herein is so efficient, the excess of hydrogen over the desired level of hydrogenation is typically no more than about 25%, preferably no more than about 10%, more preferably no more than about 5%.

30

The Catalyst

Any of the normal hydrogenation catalysts can be used. The catalyst can be, and typically is used in finely divided form, preferably having a particle size of from about 0.5 to about 20 microns, preferably from about 1 to about 10 microns, more prefer-
35 ably from about 4 to about 5 microns. The small catalyst size is preferred since the catalyst is suspended in the fatty reactant and the smaller sizes are more stably suspended.

- 5 -

The catalysts include the nickel catalysts, typically Raney nickel catalysts, either supported, or not supported. Other catalysts include platinum and palladium catalysts, again, either supported, or not supported. The catalyst can be either recycled, or not, as the process proceeds. Preferred catalysts include: nickel, copper, palladium, platinum, and cobalt catalysts. Mixtures of the above catalysts can also be used.

The level of the catalyst can be kept low, typically from about 0.05% to about 1%, preferably from about 0.02% to about 0.5%.

In the following Examples, and in the specification, all percentages, parts, and ratios are by weight and all figures are approximations unless otherwise specified.

EXAMPLES

In the following runs, the plate and frame heat exchangers have the following physical dimensions:

<u>Plate and Frame Heat Exchangers</u>			
		<u>Runs 1-6</u>	<u>Runs 7-8</u>
20	Plate Heat Exchanger Type	Gasketed	Welded
	No. of Process Channels	24	8
	No. of Channels/Pass	1	8
	Plate Gap (mm)	2.4	2.5
	Plate Width (mm)	102	102
25	Plate Length (mm)	357	10668
	Chevron Angle (from vertical)	60	60
		<u>Run 9</u>	<u>Run 10</u>
	Plate Heat Exchanger Type	Welded	Gasketed
30	No. of Process Channels	100	100
	No. of Channels/Pass	2	2
	Plate Gap (mm)	5.0	3.0
	Plate Width (mm)	200	326
	Plate Length (mm)	200	945
35	Chevron Angle (from vertical)	45	60

- 6 -

The fatty reactants in the runs are tallow fatty acids which have the following initial Iodine Values and trans fatty acid contents.

		<u>Runs 1-4</u>	<u>Runs 5-6</u>	<u>Runs 7-10</u>
5	Iodine Value	52.2	52.0	48.3
	Trans Acids	5.1	3.8	4.5

The operating conditions and results in the runs are as follows:

10

Operating Conditions and Results

	<u>Run</u>	<u>Temp. (°F)</u>	<u>Pressure* (psig)</u>	<u>FA Flow (lb/hr)</u>	<u>H₂ Flow (lb/hr)</u>
	1	430	75	60	.095
15	2	430	75	60	.068
	3	340	80	60	.095
	4	340	75	60	.055
	5	295	150	60	.050
	6	295	150	60	.025
20	7	250	250	1000	1.43
	8	415	250	700	3.27
	9	415	250	1300	6.19
	10	410	150	700	3.63

*Inlet Pressure

25

30

35

- 7 -

Operating Conditions and Results (Continued)

	<u>Run</u>	<u>Ni</u> <u>(Wt.%)</u>	<u>Iodine</u> <u>Value</u>	<u>% Trans</u> <u>Acids</u>
	1	.05	39.4	20.0
5	2	.30	41.6	16.0
	3	.50	38.4	13.1
	4	.10	45.4	10.5
	5	.05	48.8	7.6
	6	.05	45.0	8.0
10	7	.10	37.1	6.7
	8	.15	1.8	-
	9	.15	5.0	-
	10	.15	2.3	-

15 As can be seen from the above, low levels of catalyst can be
used (1 vs. 2 or 3) with essentially equivalent results. Also,
the use of lower temperatures and higher pressures (1-4 vs. 5-7)
reduces trans- fatty acid content while still reducing the Iodine
Value. It is also seen that the output can be increased by simply
20 increasing the reactant throughputs and reactor size (6 vs. 7) and
that the level of hydrogenation can be increased by simply
increasing the amount of hydrogen relative to the fatty reactant
(3 vs. 4 and 7 vs. 8-10). These results could not have been
predicted in advance.

25

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

30

35

-8-

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. The process of hydrogenating a fatty material in a plate and frame heat exchanger having a ratio of surface to volume of at least about 75, preferably from about 75 to about 300, more preferably from about 150 to about 300, at a pressure of at least 150 psig, preferably from about 150 psig to about 500 psig, more preferably from about 300 psig to about 400 psig, the pressure drop per foot being at least about 0.2 psig, preferably from about 0.2 to about 2 psig, and, preferably, wherein the temperature is maintained within from about 120°C to about 240°C, more preferably from about 120°C to about 180°C, and even more preferably from about 120°C to about 150°C.
2. The process of Claim 1 wherein said pressure drop per foot is from about 0.5 to about 1 psig.
3. The process of Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein said fatty material is selected from the group consisting of:
 - A. Fatty acids containing from about 8 to about 26 carbon atoms and having an Iodine Value of more than about 5;
 - B. Esters of said fatty acids; and
 - C. Fatty alcohols containing from about 8 to about 24 carbon atoms and having an Iodine Value of more than about 5.
4. The process of Claim 3 wherein said Iodine Value is reduced by at least about 5 while increasing the percentage of trans-isomers by no more than about 15% of the original value.
5. The process of Claim 3 or Claim 4 wherein said fatty material is a methyl ester of said fatty acids.
6. The process of Claim 3 or Claim 4 wherein said fatty material is a fatty acid.

7. The process of any of Claims 3-6 wherein the Iodine Value of said fatty material is reduced to less than about 2.

8. The process of any of the above Claims wherein said heat exchanger has a solid shell.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No

PCT/US 93/06968

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 5 C11C3/12

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 5 C11C B01J F28D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US,A,3 809 708 (PAUL S. MINOR ET AL.) 7 May 1974 cited in the application see column 2, line 65 - column 3, line 65 see column 7, line 60 - column 8, line 41 see example 7 see claims 7-10 see figures 1,6	1
A	---	3-6
Y	EP,A,0 151 933 (W.SCHMIDT GMBH & CO.KG) 21 August 1985 see page 2, last paragraph - page 3, paragraph 1 see claim 1 see figure 1	1
A	---	8
	--- -/--	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

7 December 1993

Date of mailing of the international search report

28.12.93

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+ 31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax: (+ 31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Dekeirel, M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No

PCT/US 93/06968

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US,A,4 719 970 (LUCIEN FAYOLLE ET AL.) 19 January 1988 see the whole document ---	1
A	WO,A,92 11500 (PACKINOX S.A.) 9 July 1992 see the whole document ---	1,8
A	US,A,4 510 092 (BRUCE I. ROSEN) 9 April 1985 see column 4, line 57 - line 62 see claim 1 ---	1,3
A	DATABASE WPI Week 9049, Derwent Publications Ltd., London, GB; AN 90-364587 & JP,A,2 261 897 (SNOW BRAND MILK PRODUCTS) 24 October 1990 cited in the application see abstract ---	1,3
A	FR,A,946 613 (ANDRÉ POLGAR ET AL.) 9 June 1949 see the whole document ---	1,3
A	US,A,3 634 471 (WOLFGANG KEHSE) 11 January 1972 cited in the application see the whole document ---	1,3
A	US,A,4 871 485 (JACOB B. RIVERS) 3 October 1989 cited in the application see column 25, line 17 - line 24 see claims 19,35 -----	1,3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 93/06968

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A-3809708	07-05-74	BE-A- 762662 CA-A- 1009823 CH-A- 527767 DE-A- 2106082 FR-A- 2087779 GB-A- 1319182 NL-A- 7101709 SE-B- 386376	09-08-71 10-05-77 15-09-72 12-08-71 31-12-71 06-06-73 11-08-71 09-08-76
EP-A-0151933	21-08-85	DE-A- 3404374 JP-A- 60186692 US-A- 4546826	14-08-85 24-09-85 15-10-85
US-A-4719970	19-01-88	FR-A- 2562997 DE-A- 3560735 EP-A, B 0165179 JP-B- 5014196 JP-A- 60238697	18-10-85 05-11-87 18-12-85 24-02-93 27-11-85
WO-A-9211500	09-07-92	FR-A- 2670877 EP-A- 0515669	26-06-92 02-12-92
US-A-4510092	09-04-85	NONE	
FR-A-946613		NONE	
US-A-3634471	11-01-72	US-A- 3497327	24-02-70
US-A-4871485	03-10-89	US-A- 4613410 AU-A- 8074087 EP-A- 0277230 WO-A- 8800855 US-A- 4971660 US-A- 4973430	23-09-86 24-02-88 10-08-88 11-02-88 20-11-90 27-11-90